

## Ryan Schultz

News and Views on Social VR, Virtual Worlds, and the Metaverse

---

# Review: Alien Rescue Opens an Exciting New Chapter in Immersive Storytelling in the Metaverse

**COMING SOON:** There will be a contest on the RyanSchultz.com blog, where you could win a ticket to see *Alien Rescue*! Details coming soon...stay tuned!

*The MetaMovie is exciting beyond words. It may actually be now doing what history will see as the beginning of a brand new interactive movie entertainment industry.*

—Karel Hulec of NeosVR (where Alien Rescue takes place)





This afternoon, I had the privilege of participating in the impressive new MetaMovie production *Alien Rescue*, created and directed by Jason Moore and starring Marinda Botha, Nicole Rigo, Kenneth Rougeau, Craig Woodward—and *you!*

Yes, you don't just watch *Alien Rescue*; you're a key part of the show! There are two roles: Hero and Eyebot. The Hero is the one audience member right in the centre of the story, where they role-play with the cast. Heroes can say or do anything they want, and they can even affect the storyline (the woman, who was the Hero of the performance I attended, landed up giving a hilarious nickname to one of the characters, which became a running joke throughout the rest of the performance!).

Advertisements



**Plastic Surgeon Tells: "Doing This Every Morning Can Snap Back Sagging Skin (No Creams Needed)"**

REPORT THIS AD

Advertisements

REPORT T



The rest of the audience are small, mute Eyebots, who only communicate with the

tors via red, green, or yellow lights, but who play an integral part in moving the story forward (often by scouting ahead and warning the Hero and the other actors to hidden dangers). Even better, you can maneuver your Eyebot to catch the performance as it unfolds from any possible point of view! You can choose to follow a particular character if you wish, or you can just wander around as you please, and follow your fancy.

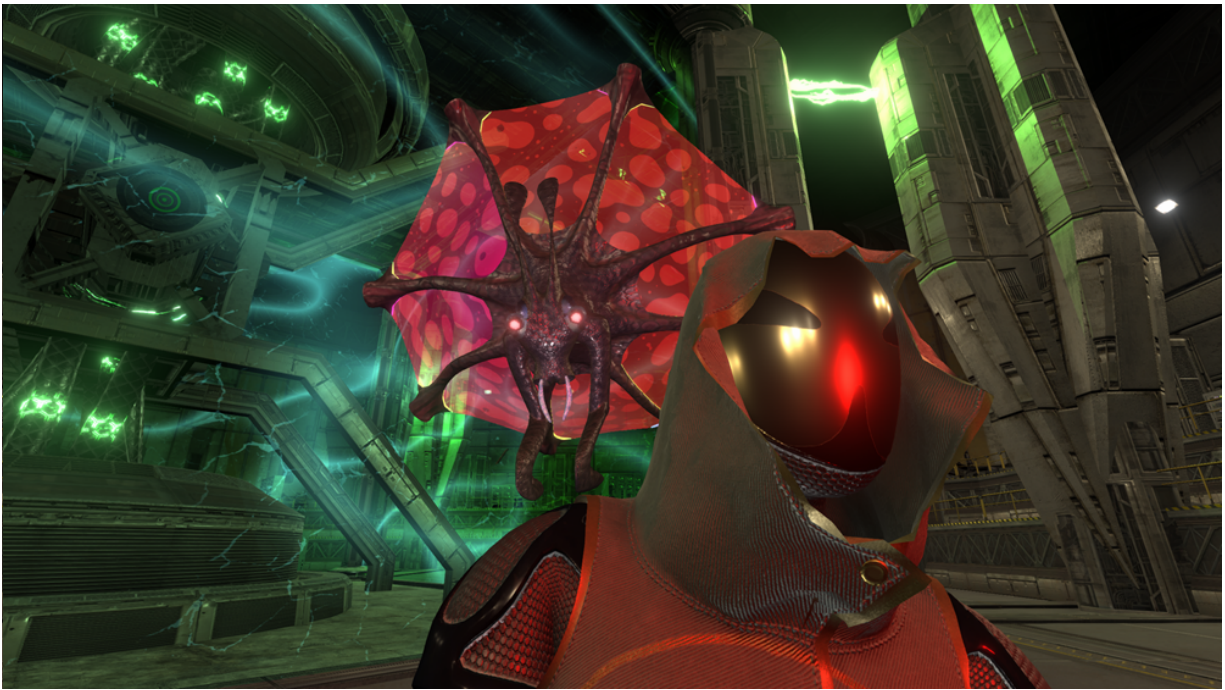
The actors in *Alien Rescue* are all professionals with years of VR acting experience, physically located across the globe, from New York to South Africa, from Kansas to Connecticut. This troupe has been working closely together for nearly three years. All the actors used the HTC Vive Pro Eye headset, which features eye tracking, along with the newly released Vive Facial Tracker, which tracks the movements of the mouth and the lower face. These added expressions—subtle shifts of the eyes, a blink or a wink, a slight grin or a strong grimace—help bring their avatars to life. [Here's a demonstration of just how realistic avatar movements can be with these features enabled.](#)





At times, the action splits into two separate conversations or scenes. One example was when we all entered a laboratory through a series of dark, winding corridors, while the two actors ahead of me (leading the group) were having one conversation, and the two actors behind me (acting as a rear guard) were having a second one! As an Eyebot hovering between these two groups, I heard snippets of both conversations, which felt like a very natural and intuitive way to learn more about the characters, much as if you were drifting from conversation to conversation at a cocktail party (only this one was with random, weird alien creatures popping up!).





Speaking of alien creatures, all the imaginatively designed avatars in *Alien Rescue* were created by the very talented Chris McBride, whom I interviewed in season one of the *Metaverse Newscast* (back when he was still practicing his artistry in avatar creation on the former social VR platform of High Fidelity, before he moved to NeosVR to work on the MetaMovie project):

Metaverse Newscast Episode 5: Ryan Schultz Interviews Chris M...



And here's another *Metaverse Newscast* interview I did with director Jason Moore (again, two years ago, in High Fidelity, when *Alien Rescue* was still in its earliest planning stages):

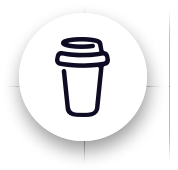


## Metaverse Newscast Ep 7: Ryan Schultz Interviews Director Jason...



The set for Alien Rescue is just absolutely **insane** in its overall dimensions (the following quote comes from the press kit I received):

*With seven large and detailed maps (game lingo for levels, or areas of a world), Alien Rescue immerses audiences into a dark and spooky sci-fi environment with barely-lit passageways, creepy labs, and eerie soundscapes. The crown jewel is the incredible Blackhawk Spaceship, at 160 meters long (nearly two football fields) and 55 meters high, with four levels and over twenty rooms. And, our maps are all connected using a custom programmed ‘instant teleport’ system that reduces load time from one map to the next to zero seconds. Audiences traverse the world of Alien Rescue seamlessly and instantaneously, without the typical “loading screen” found in most VR games and experiences.*





The Blackhawk starship

This afternoon’s performance was the last of a series of private, invitation-based shows before the official premiere next week. According to a press release:

*This form of live storytelling in the metaverse is truly new, therefore the prestigious Raindance Film Festival has selected the work to have its world premiere there in late October 2021.*

Advertisements



**Top Surgeon: This Simple Trick Helps Empty Your Bowels Every Morning**

REPORT THIS AD

Advertisements

DuckDuckGo

**Do be a stranger.**

Protect your privacy online for free.

Add to Firefox

REPORT THIS AD

You can buy tickets for shows starting Friday, October 29th, 2021, and running until Sunday, November 21st, 2021. Tickets can be purchased through the MetaMovie website, via EventBrite.



**I am telling you right now: you do NOT want to miss this event!** It's the most incredible and imaginative thing I have experienced in virtual reality all year (and trust me, I've seen a *lot* in these past twelve months of pandemic lockdown). The MetaMovie project is a genre-defying mix, combining elements of cinematic storytelling, video games, role playing, and immersive theatre into something completely new, different, and exciting. **GO SEE THIS!** I loved it!!



Now, a few important points. You can experience *Alien Rescue* in flatscreen, desktop mode, but obviously for greater immersion, virtual reality is the way to go! Experiencing *Alien Rescue* in VR requires a PCVR setup. All major VR headsets will work: HTC Vive, Valve Index, HP, Oculus Rift, and Oculus Quest (tethered or Air Link). The minimum graphics card requirements are a Nvidia GTX 1060 or AMD RX 570 with a minimum of 8GB of RAM. A wired connection is **strongly** recommended!





Advertisements



**U.S. Surgeon: This Simple Trick Empties Almost Immediately Your Gut Every Morning**

REPORT THIS AD

Advertisements



REPORT THIS AD

You should know that you will need a higher-end CPU and GPU on your personal computer to experience the show comfortably in VR; I have an Intel Core i5-6600 chip and an NVIDIA GeForce GTX1080 graphics card on my PC, with 16GB of RAM, and I crashed—twice!— while loading the map for *Alien Rescue* (however, once the world was fully loaded, I encountered few problems). Every so often, one of the actors' voices would get all robot-y, but any such audio problems were temporary.

The show is approximately an hour and a half long, from beginning to end, and if you stick around, you might even win an award for your participation in a ceremony held in the credits lounge. (I won two awards!)

If you have not already done so, you will have to create a (free) account on [the NeosVR social VR platform](#), then download and install the client software. [Please read the entire technical requirements section of the ticket-buying page on the MetaMovie website.](#)

To learn more about the MetaMovie project, please [visit their website](#), [join their Discord server](#), or follow them on social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

